



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC PROPOSES \$9,000 FINE FOR PACIFIC RADIOPHARMACY, LTD.

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a fine of \$9,000 against Pacific Radiopharmacy, Ltd. of Honolulu, Hawaii, for violations of NRC administrative and radioactive material handling requirements.

In a letter to the company, Ellis W. Merschoff, Administrator of the NRC's Region IV office in Arlington, Texas, said that as a result of an NRC inspection concluded in September 2002, the agency determined that the company willfully violated certain NRC requirements associated with the handling of radioactive materials. Separately, the company's failure to follow NRC requirements resulted in a radiopharmacist receiving a significant overexposure.

In addition to failing to properly follow NRC regulations, the NRC has determined that the company's employees "displayed a careless disregard for the requirements to wear personal monitoring devices in areas where radioactive materials are used and stored," Merschoff said. Two senior company officials engaged in deliberate misconduct by knowingly failing to monitor their hands and clothing for radioactive contamination when leaving restricted areas, Merschoff said.

The company had taken corrective actions by suspending the radiopharmacist from further work with radioactive materials during 2002, changing procedures for handling radioactive materials, purchasing new radiation monitors for its staff, promising to follow NRC regulations in the future, and contracting with an individual to act as a radiation safety officer to conduct unannounced visits to the company's facility to ensure staff compliance with NRC and company rules and regulations.

Pacific Radiopharmacy officials met with the NRC in October 2002 to discuss the violations. The NRC has classified one violation as a Severity Level I problem, which carries a \$6,000 fine, and one violation as a Severity Level III problem, which carries a \$3,000 fine. The agency uses a four-level severity scale in which Severity Level I is the most serious.

The NRC's letter, its enclosures, and the company's response will be made available to interested members of the public through the agency's public electronic reading room at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. Help in accessing these documents is available from the NRC Public Document Room at (301) 415-4737 or at 1-800-397-4209.

The company has 30 days from receipt of the letter to either pay the civil penalty or to challenge imposition of the fine.

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